

REMARKS

In the final Office Action of September 27, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 6, 16, 17, and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,651,700 to Sato et al.; rejected claims 15 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sato et al.; objected to claim 18 because of a lack of antecedent basis; allowed claims 1-4 and 7-13; and objected to claims 14, 18, and 19 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that claims 14, 18, and 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for allowing claims 1-4 and 7-13, and for the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 14, 18, and 19. Applicants have cancelled claims 14, 20, and 21, and have amended claim 6 to further claim aspects of Applicants' invention. Accordingly, claims 1-4, 6-13, and 15-19 are pending in this Application. No new matter has been added by this Reply.

Applicants respectfully traverse the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection of claims 6, 16, 17, and 20 for at least the reason that Sato et al. fails to disclose every claim element. Specifically, claim 6, from which claims 16 and 17 ultimately depend, has been rewritten to include the allowable subject matter of claim 14. Accordingly, the section 102(b) rejection with respect to claims 6, 16, and 17 is improper and should be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully traverse the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection of claims 15 and 21 for at least the reason that Sato et al. fails to disclose every claim element. Specifically, claim 6, from which claim 15 depends, has been rewritten to include the

allowable subject matter of claim 14. Accordingly, the section 103(a) rejection with respect to claim 15 is improper and should be withdrawn.

Regarding the objection to claim 18 because of a lack of antecedent basis, Applicants have amended claim 18. In particular, Applicants have replaced the phrase "terminal" that was objected to by the Examiner, with the phrase "terminal fixtures", which has proper antecedent basis. Accordingly, Applicants request the objection to claim 18 be withdrawn.

Regarding the objection to claims 14, 18, and 19, Applicants have amended claim 6, from which claims 18 and 19 ultimately depend, to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 14. Accordingly, Applicants request the objection with respect to claims 18 and 19 be withdrawn.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization of the Office Action.

Applicants respectfully request that this Reply under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered by the Examiner, placing claims 6 and 15-19 in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendment of claim 6 does not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Reply should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully point out that the rejections in the final Office Action presented some new arguments as to the application of the art against

Applicants' invention. It is respectfully submitted that the entering of the claim amendments of this Reply would allow the Applicants to reply to the final rejections and place the application in condition for allowance.

Finally, Applicants submit that the entry of the claim amendments would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.


In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that this claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of the claim amendments, the Examiner's reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account no. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 
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